



Embassy of the United States of America
Guatemala City, Guatemala

November 25, 2008

Dear American Citizen Warden:

The following is a Warden Message concerning personal security guidance. Please share the following information with the American citizens on your warden list, and any other Americans you know, as soon as possible. It should be disseminated as widely as possible within the American citizen community. Please contact the American Citizen Services section via e-mail (amcitsguatemala@state.gov), fax (2326-4655), or telephone (2326-4405) if you have any questions. Thank you very much for your support and assistance.

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The U.S. Embassy has issued the following security guidance to its personnel in light of the increasing crime rate in Guatemala and the expected spike in criminal activity during the upcoming holiday season:

Travel along Carretera El Salvador east of kilometer 13 (Colegio Maya) is strongly discouraged between the hours of 2100 hours and 0600 hours. Over the past few months, there have been numerous reports of violent criminal activity along Carretera El Salvador (Inter-Americano) including several homicides, car-jackings and kidnappings. The Embassy has received reports of well-armed bands operating all along the Carretera both inside and outside Guatemala City limits. The overwhelming majority of these crimes have taken place at night. There has also been an increase in alcohol-related accidents on the Carretera after daylight hours.

When visiting Lake Atitlan, travel along Routes #4 and #11 should be avoided. CA-1 through Solola should be used when visiting Lake Atitlan. Travel along Route #14 between Parramos (north of Antigua) and Escuintla should also be avoided if possible. There have been a series of violent highway robberies along Route #4 on the south side and west shores of Lake Atitlan between San Lucas Toliman and Chacala and Route #11 on the east shore between San Lucas Toliman and CA-1 as well as along National Route #14 between Antigua and Escuintla. Over the past several months, tourists of various nationalities have been targeted along these routes in daylight robberies, sometimes resulting in physical injury or sexual assault of victims.

Individuals should avoid driving outside of Guatemala City after dark.

Individuals in Guatemala City should avoid parking on the street in residential areas and should avoid walking in all areas of the city after dark. Individuals should also avoid displaying valuables in public especially laptop cases, cellular phones and expensive jewelry and should not leave purses, bags, packages or other valuables in a vehicle where they can be seen from the outside. The Embassy has received increasing reports of armed robberies, car-jackings, abductions, homicides and burglaries in Zones 10, 14 and 15 of Guatemala City. A recent trend of armed robberies by assailants on motorcycles has been reported in residential areas of the city. Several vehicle break-ins have been reported in paid parking lots within view of armed security guards.

Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's web site at <http://travel.state.gov> where the current Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be found. Information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States, or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.

The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala is located at Avenida Reforma 7-01, Zone 10, Guatemala City. Please contact the American Citizen Services section by phone at 011-(502)2326-4405, by fax at (502)2326-4655, or by sending an email to amcitsguatemala@state.gov. The after-hours emergency number is 011-502-2331-2354 or (502)2331-2354

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